



**Noted: Transmisogyny
in the Radical Left**

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Warning: There are numerous examples of transmisogyny in this zine, as well as descriptions of other oppressive behaviors and systems. There are many non-graphic mentions of sexual and domestic violence. There is a brief description of child sexual assault in section 3.

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Introduction

This is a zine about transmisogyny in radical left spaces—anarchist & other anti-authoritarian communist—as well as in anti-assimilationist LGBT/queer spaces. It is written for folks who want to combat transmisogyny but aren't themselves constrained by transmisogyny. This isn't meant to be a “transmisogyny 101” primer (we hope this illuminates more nuanced forms of transmisogyny), nor to make any claim that we know the best ways to articulate and explain gender & gendered oppression. We're a group of friends and comrades in the Bay Area sharing personal experiences. A description of how this zine came to be, written by one of the editors, might illustrate why we are writing it and how we think readers could approach the stories:

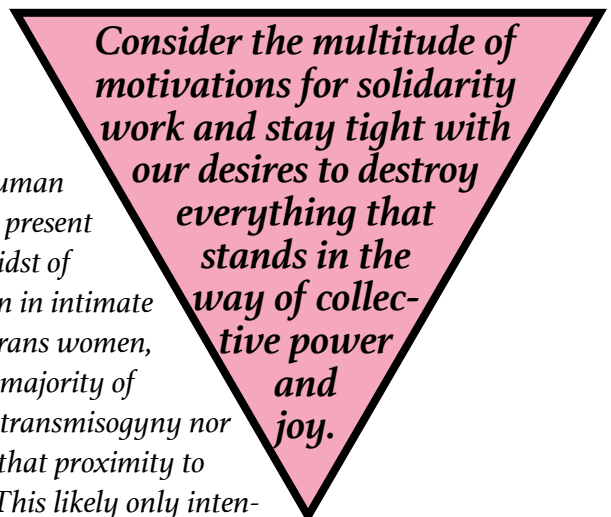
I've been calling myself an anarchist for a decade, but I only started “organizing” in specifically anarchist spaces a couple years ago. Several months in, I realized that although I knew many trans women socially within a majority-queer anarchist milieu, few were present during explicitly political conversations. My assumption was that the organizing spaces weren't safe enough for most trans women to want to participate. (I assumed so because any space is relatively unsafe for relatively marginalized people; I know I avoid spaces where straights dominate social norms. I also had an intuition—based on comparison with majority-trans women social spaces—that the dominant norms of these anarchist meetings would make them inaccessible for trans women.)

In anarchist organizing spaces, I heard next to no mention of transmisogyny as a problem to work on, either structurally or within our communities. To be clear, among anarchists I've heard plenty of conversations about “transphobia” and “patriarchy,” but not “transmisogyny” specifically. I could hypothesize why queer anarchists seem to avoid addressing transmisogyny, but I believe insights will emerge throughout the zine.

I'm a white AFAB genderqueer, so I have no real idea what it might be like to be a trans woman in any space. That said, other political groups I'd previously participated in seemed more inclusive of trans women, even though those spaces were more generic left/progressive/socialist than anarchist. I do know there were more transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people present and more frequent conversations about transmisogyny in those groups. The contrast between anarchist and non-anarchist leftist spaces has been notable and unsettling.

In order to do anything other than stew in my feelings of disappointment, I decided to ask folks to have a conversation about how transmisogyny operates in anarchist spaces. I specifically invited queer cis women and AFAB enbies. I did this because I know there already are, for example, active anarchist anti-patriarchy men's groups. Yet I know of no spaces where it's normalized for people who are not men but also not TMC to have conversations about how we can be accountable for gendered harm.

I have many motivations for working on this zine in addition to a value of inclusiveness. One that seems relevant to mention is that I experience intense grief and anger when I think about instances of transmisogyny around me. Partly because I'm a human with some empathy like anybody else. Partly because I've been present for emotional processing with trans women who were in the midst of being hurt by transmisogyny from so-called comrades. I've been in intimate partnerships with people of many genders including multiple trans women, and the majority of my social interactions are in spaces with a majority of TMC people. I share this not to claim authority on the topic of transmisogyny nor suggest I experience its harmful effects directly, but to be clear that proximity to certain types of repetitive trauma does have a painful impact. This likely only inten-



sifies my drive to fight transmisogyny.

I'm sure each of us has an internal drive to resist oppression in all forms that connects with our love for our self, family, and friends. I'm choosing to put aside fear of being labeled altruistic or "saviorist" as I work on this project that holds meaning for me personally and is hopefully useful for other non-TMC folks. I invite readers to consider the multitude of motivations for solidarity work and to stay tight with our desires to destroy everything that stands in the way of collective power and joy.

After one of us made a call to gather as described above, a small group of us met. We talked about our understanding of what transmisogyny looks like in radical spaces and how we might combat it. We shared a belief that, while reading isn't everything, texts can provide a touchstone for personal or group reflection about work that needs to be done. When we searched for texts about gender oppression written by TMC people, we found lots about how to recognize and combat street harassment, misgendering, or verbal abuse by avowed TERFs. While we recognize the gross harm of these problems, they aren't acutely present in our queer rad-left spaces. We knew from conversations with trans women friends that subtler forms of transmisogyny were present here (albeit often not all that subtle from their perspectives, of course), and we wanted ways to talk about this with other non-TMC people.

We found quite a bit online discussing systemic aspects of transmisogyny including language use, physical violence, visibility, TERFs, medical access, criminalization, and the need for mutual aid. We'd encourage readers to seek out information about these topics if you're unfamiliar; there's lots to read and learn from social media or academic texts. Here are some examples from public social media accounts:

The screenshot shows a social media thread. At the top, a user named Kat Blaque (verified) posts a question: "Give me an argument against the term 'cis' that isn't transphobic." She includes an edit: "Some people don't have a gender identity, but to suggest that only transgender people experience gender and cis people do not is... well, just not true?". Below this, a user named Mark Sanchez replies: "'cis' is ciswoman means that female people opt into their own oppression. It declares that a female person believes in gender identity woo woo instead of simply being a woman as a result of being born of the female sex". Kat Blaque replies to Mark: "No, it's a term that applies to both men and women that acknowledges that the person being discussed is not Transgender. It, in fact, makes a specification about someone's biology, it doesn't say whether or not someone is more or less for said biology, it just acknowledges it. But like I said in this video, the people who reject the term are generally transphobic and I'm gonna go out on a limb and say you aren't a fan of trans people and their 'gender identity woo'". Mark Sanchez replies to Kat: "@Kat Blaque Ok but being transgender requires you to have a gender identity. Being not-transgender requires the same. People who are simply male or female, and don't have this mystic internal essence, they can't be cis. Cis is a trick that makes female people the oppressors over males". Kat Blaque replies to Mark: "Wrong again. Everyone has a gender identity. Most people's gender aligns with their sex. Those people are cis. And again, those people can be both men".

“There's a
backlash.

With newfound
visibility...there are more
girls getting murdered.
There are two sides to
every fucking coin.
Nothing is as simple as it
appears to be.

#TDOR

miss major griffin-gracy
in 'trap door', 2017.

@assignedmalecomics

TERF ISN'T A SLUR!



IT'S THE ACRONYM FOR
"TRANS-EXCLUSIONARY
RADICAL FEMINIST"
WHICH RADICAL FEMINISTS
INVENTED THEMSELVES TO
DESCRIBE THE ONES THAT
WERE TRANS-EXCLUSIONARY.

(THERE'S NOTHING
RADICAL OR FEMINIST
ABOUT THAT, BUT THAT
WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST
CONTRADICTION.)

THE ONLY REASON
THEY'RE NOW SAYING
IT'S A SLUR IS TO SILENCE
TRANS PEOPLE WHO ARE
CALLING THEM OUT.

SO CALL YOUR LOCAL
TERF A TERF TODAY!

BITCHES BREW

Bitches Brew Fund

Bitches Brew is a mutual aid initiative started by Black, Indigenous and trans women of color whose goal is to raise enough money to pay for basic hormone replacement therapy-related medical care for trans women and trans femmes of color. Priority will be given to Black, Indigenous and undocumented trans women and trans femmes of color. This is a resource for our sisters, not our cisters!

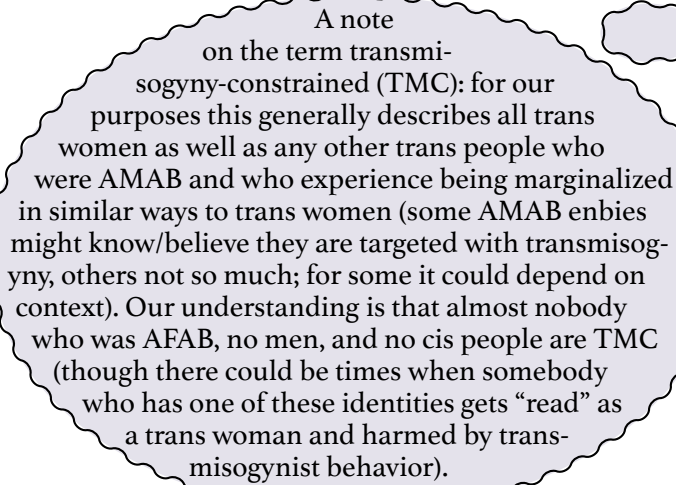
***We are also giving special priority to incarcerated trans women and femmes of color so please share this with folks on the inside because we can and we will figure out a way to get them their mones.

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Your email is not part of your response.

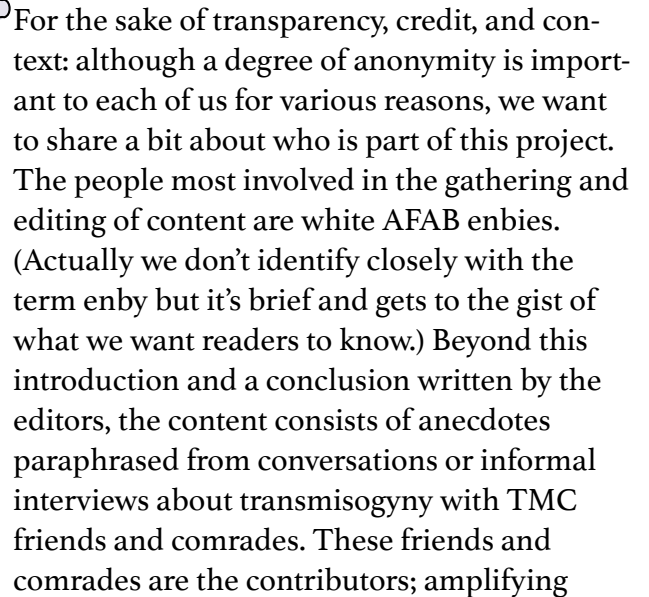
We found fewer explanations of connections between systemic transmisogyny and interpersonal experiences. There are certainly trans women sharing stories of intra-LGBTQ or rad-left oppression, but there just seems to be less written about this in public forums. Here are a couple examples we did see:



After doing this research, we formed the idea of making a zine. Our goal is to prompt reflection among folks in our immediate community and reach a broader audience where people could be facing similar problems. There are likely patterns in the reproduction of transmisogyny as it manifests in many queer communities. Some of our friends who are trans women wanted to be part of the project, and then we found even more folks to be involved, so here it is.



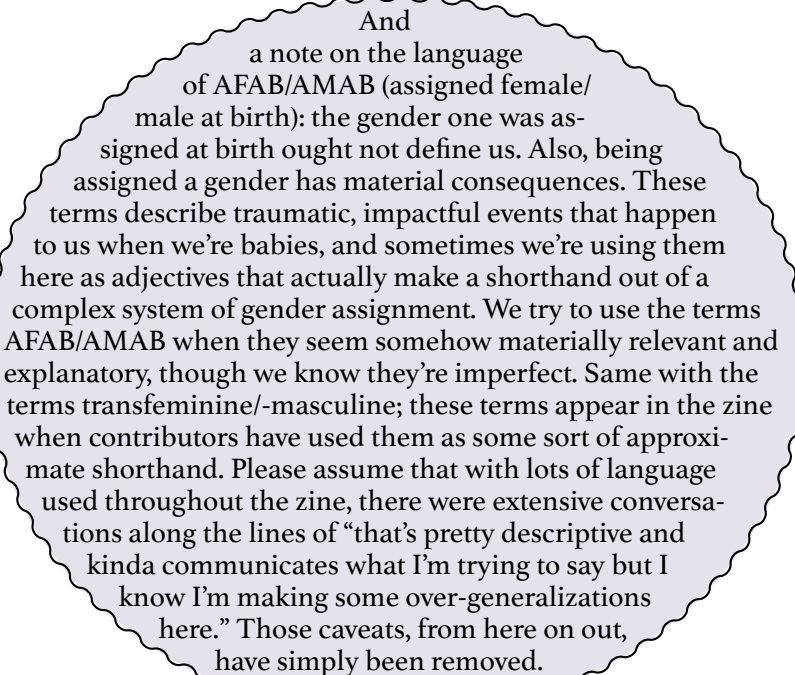
A note on the term transmisogyny-constrained (TMC): for our purposes this generally describes all trans women as well as any other trans people who were AMAB and who experience being marginalized in similar ways to trans women (some AMAB enbies might know/believe they are targeted with transmisogyny, others not so much; for some it could depend on context). Our understanding is that almost nobody who was AFAB, no men, and no cis people are TMC (though there could be times when somebody who has one of these identities gets “read” as a trans woman and harmed by transmisogynist behavior).



For the sake of transparency, credit, and context: although a degree of anonymity is important to each of us for various reasons, we want to share a bit about who is part of this project. The people most involved in the gathering and editing of content are white AFAB enbies. (Actually we don’t identify closely with the term enby but it’s brief and gets to the gist of what we want readers to know.) Beyond this introduction and a conclusion written by the editors, the content consists of anecdotes paraphrased from conversations or informal interviews about transmisogyny with TMC friends and comrades. These friends and comrades are the contributors; amplifying

their stories and insights is why the zine exists. Most contributors are trans women; a few identify as nonbinary, trans girls, or agender. About two-thirds of the contributors are white or mixed and white, and one-third are Black, Brown, and/or Indigenous. Almost all contributors identify as neurodivergent, mentally ill, and/or invisibly disabled. All told, there are about a dozen of us involved in the project.

Some of the anecdotes presented in this zine are one person’s experience. Some are summaries of similar memories shared by multiple contributors. In the case of the former, we’ve included a bit of demographic information such as race or a specific gender in the account. Sometimes trans women and AMAB enbies both experience transmisogyny in a given context but differently. Furthermore, there are some experiences of marginalization that all trans women likely have experienced and others that specifically target and further marginalize trans women of color, gender-non-conforming trans women, disabled trans women, and other multiply-marginalized trans women. We won’t claim to be doing brilliant intersectional work, but we encourage readers to pay attention to patterns in how multiple oppressions work to cause specific, amplified harm.



And a note on the language of AFAB/AMAB (assigned female/male at birth): the gender one was assigned at birth ought not define us. Also, being assigned a gender has material consequences. These terms describe traumatic, impactful events that happen to us when we’re babies, and sometimes we’re using them here as adjectives that actually make a shorthand out of a complex system of gender assignment. We try to use the terms AFAB/AMAB when they seem somehow materially relevant and explanatory, though we know they’re imperfect. Same with the terms transfeminine/-masculine; these terms appear in the zine when contributors have used them as some sort of approximate shorthand. Please assume that with lots of language used throughout the zine, there were extensive conversations along the lines of “that’s pretty descriptive and kinda communicates what I’m trying to say but I know I’m making some over-generalizations here.” Those caveats, from here on out, have simply been removed.

Understandably, putting energy into editing every draft and publishing the zine isn't something any trans women were interested in doing, but all contributors provided feedback on near-final drafts.

The editors invited participation from about twice as many contributors as ended up being part of the project. We invited folks who had told us they were trans women or trans and AMAB (sometimes in those explicit terms; other times telling us this might sound like, for example, "cis people often misgender me male.") We weren't certain if everybody we invited to contribute identified as TMC, but we assumed they might. Those who declined participation largely said they didn't want to prioritize dedicating time to this purpose or that it would be too draining/triggering to recount all the painful memories. On the other hand, a couple people we reached out to said that they do not experience notable, harmful transmisogyny in queer rad-left spaces. We share this to reiterate that we're not experts on gendered oppression; we've made plenty of incorrect assumptions, and we're actively part of a learning process as much as anybody.

What we know for sure is that transmisogyny makes life barely livable for too many of our loved ones; none of us will be free of gendered oppression until the conditions that make transmisogyny possible are long-destroyed; and, like every form of intersecting oppressions on this colonial-capitalist-dominated beautiful-planet-turned-hell, transmisogyny is alive and well in rad left spaces.

Because our audience is people in rad-left and/or queer communities, we've focused on transmisogyny as it happens in these spaces. Different contributors varied in how heavily the examples here weigh on them (compared to transmisogyny elsewhere): from actually feeling safer outside queer or rad-left spaces; to feeling awash in some form of transmisogyny always, everywhere; to barely noticing transmisogyny in queer rad-left spaces compared to in the street, while grocery shopping, at work, etc.

If you're not TMC, please take to heart what you read here while remembering that the content of one zine can only recount the tip of an iceberg of marginalizing experiences. The stories we've collected here are intended to serve as an opportunity for us all to deepen our compassion and better understand how transmisogyny works structurally, not as a call-out of individuals. There are suggestions for combatting transmisogyny and examples of accountability-in-progress; please build on these and take action against transmisogyny among your people and communities.

We welcome feedback from anybody about this zine; feel free to send it to tm_zine@riseup.net.

Note on Sections and Themes:

The contents are organized into themes. These weren't intended to align with any particular gender theory but were chosen to support learning. Section titles are based on patterns and connections we noticed among the stories. (Did we fail to recognize other important patterns? We encourage readers to draw more connections and themes from the anecdotes. Feel free to email us at tm_zine@riseup.net if you want to share.)

Some entries could have been placed in multiple sections. We've included tags to match this reality that the themes are fluid. Our goal isn't to hyper-categorize each story but rather to reflect the hegemonic interconnectedness inherent in experiences of systemic marginalization.

Tags by section:

1: Multiply Marginalized

2: Crisis

3: Blame

4-5: AFAB

6: Labor

7: Organizing dynamics

8: Internalization

9-10: Solidarity

There are some themes we noticed that didn't coalesce into full sections but which seem important enough to note:

- There are some expressions of transmisogyny that come from society in general and others more often reproduced by people with particular identities. There are already sections noting patterns in how AFAB people treat transmisogyny-constrained people. We've also included tags specifically for "cis women" and "men."
- People often seem to expect transmisogyny-constrained people to give them the benefit of the doubt that they're not trying to be transmisogynist. But it's exhausting for any marginalized person to assume positive intentions, especially when there are so many reasons not to. When this dynamic is clearly at play, we've included the tag "intent."
- Having one's identity tokenized, romanticized, or fetishized is a common experience for transmisogyny-constrained people. We've given some stories where this shows up the tag "tokenize."
- Isolation of trans women from public spaces, social networks, and material resources is a key way in which transmisogyny operates. When transmisogyny-constrained people are marginalized even within LGBT spaces, isolation becomes extreme. When examples of transmisogyny throughout the zine seem especially likely to lead to the isolation of transmisogyny-constrained people, they're tagged "isolation."

Section 1: Transmisogyny intersects with other forms of oppression in specific ways that amplify harm to people who are transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) and people of color, disabled, or otherwise multiply marginalized.

In many majority-queer rad left political spaces, there are very few TMC people present and often zero visibly disabled trans women or trans women of color.


Other tags: isolation

A whole zine could be written just about transmisogynoir and how it functions both as a compounding of transmisogyny and misogynoir as well as in unique ways that specifically harm Black trans women and other TMC people of color. Working on transmisogyny doesn't mean work has been done on transmisogynoir.

In white-normative spaces, a Brown Indigenous trans girl explains, there's lots of projection about all manner of topics. People don't want to be called racist or sexist but get defensive when conversations about structural white supremacy and heteronormativity are broached. She finds that her identity, which in addition to being a trans woman of color also includes other markers of being non-normative such as looking punk, becomes tokenized by people who would rather not put work into dismantling structural oppression.

Other tags: intent, blame

Cadres of culture carriers set norms for what is considered effective, respectful communication patterns. These people are almost always white and either men, or in queer spaces, AFAB. Many TMC people are frequently scolded by these hubs of clout for breaking unspoken social rules.



**TMC
people are scolded
by hubs of clout for
breaking unspoken
social rules.**

Other tags: AFAB, men

A disproportionate number of TMC people are neurodivergent compared with any other gender group. This isn't the right context for digging into this correlation, but we want to clarify that neither transness nor neurodivergence are "diseases" with "causes." That said, here's one good reason it's relevant in a context of resisting transmisogyny: trans women are too often expected to behave like neurotypical, normative cis women in order to be treated with a modicum of respect as women, which compounds ableism they experience. Trans women are disproportionately affected by ableism; combating either transmisogyny or ableism requires combating both.

Other tags: intent, isolation

Too many supposedly rad-left spaces are still invested in making existing structures and institutions work better, making them into what they "should be." In fact, the structures are inherently white supremacist and transmisogynist. For example, too many leftists take liberal symbolic approaches such as tweaking images of the U.S. flag but balk at openly burning flags. This approach enables the continuation of transmisogyny.

Other tags: organizing dynamics

In a Brown Indigenous trans girl's experience in left atheist sobriety groups, she still encounters misgendering, and many people avoid speaking to her or being as physically close to her as they get to other members. It leaves her wondering if they're afraid of her, or afraid of social stigma associated with making mistakes if they say something to her that they "shouldn't" have.

Other tags: isolation, blame

Often, when white, non-TMC people are on drugs, they're especially prone to being extra affectionate. Many people have the experience of behaving extra-loving when consuming certain drugs. But if you're a cis white person and you can't express admiration for somebody when you're sober, or you can't follow through on the passionately-made social plans or earnestly promised acts of solidarity that you make when you're high, it's probably not yet a good idea for you to get intoxicated and hang out with multiply marginalized folks. For multiply-marginalized TMC people, the stakes of everything in life are much higher, and the contradictions between your stated feelings or values and your actions are starkly obvious and disappointing to the point of prompting heavy grief.

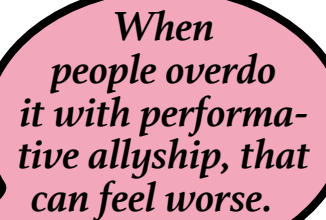
Other tags: AFAB, solidarity, men



For multiply marginalized TMC people, the contradictions between your stated feelings or values and your actions are stark.

There's a wide variety of reactions from people in rad-left spaces to TMC people whose gender expressions they don't understand. Sometimes, according to a Brown Indigenous trans girl, people approach her existence with shock or aggression ("What the fuck!?"). At other times there's more of an energy of "Hey cool! I'm on your side. I'm an ally!" When people overdo it with performative allyship, that can sometimes but not always feel worse.

Other tags: intent, men, AFAB



When people overdo it with performative allyship, that can feel worse.

A Brown Indigenous trans girl described transmisogyny in rad-left spaces as manifesting in folks being passive, not knowing how to engage, staring, and wondering about her gender expression. She said it seems like a vibe or feeling, one that's sometimes (but not always) bad or uncomfortable for her personally but which she notices.

Section 2: Because of structural transmisogyny, transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people more often face crises that aren't experienced as extremely by non-TMC people but receive less support from comrades in managing those crises.

TMC people are frequently told they're brave/strong/powerful/genuine/inspiring/passionate/down for the cause, then rarely supported with material needs.

Other tags: tokenize

In rad left mutual aid spaces, "lack of resources" to "fully" meet needs of TMC people leads to avoidance of even working with them at all. Basically, there exists a blanket fear of engaging with AMAB trans bodies.

Other tags: blame, isolation

When planning direct actions, the risk of arrest is often treated very casually, leaving trans women on their own to prepare for escalated risks associated with being locked up with men.

Other Tags: men, labor, organizing dynamics, isolation

A TMC Black person had been evicted and was searching for housing. A white AFAB enby said they had housing for them. When asked for contact info of the potential new roommates or landlord, the "helpful friend" said "Oh, you, always worried. I've got you!" They finally shared those contacts af-



Days before housing was needed, the offer fell through.

ter four requests. Three days before the housing was needed, the offer fell through. There was no apology or even acknowledgement of how difficult that might be for the person who needed housing.

Other Tags: intent, AFAB, multiply marginalized

In the last year, there has been a deluge of transphobic legislation specifically targeting women and youth, especially impacting trans girls. Very few cis people in society at large have paid any attention to this legislation, but this complete neglect has been mirrored among radicals, too. One trans woman reported noticing zero cis radicals even mentioning the oppressive legislation on social media or calling to check in on trans women friends, much less taking action. This is in sharp contrast with radicals' responses to legislation that negatively impacts mostly cis women. For example, a couple years ago, many people organized to assure abortion access could continue for people with uteruses living in states with anti-abortion legislation. This doesn't need to stop, but legislation targeting trans girls should at least be mentioned.

Other tags: cis women, intent, men, solidarity

Society in general is really bad at providing support for people actively going through domestic violence. This isn't exclusively a matter of transmisogyny, but it is relevant to bring up in the context of transmisogyny because a hugely disproportionate number of trans women experience domestic violence compared with any other gender group. If you want to be a decent friend to trans women, figure out how to be a decent friend to people going through domestic violence.

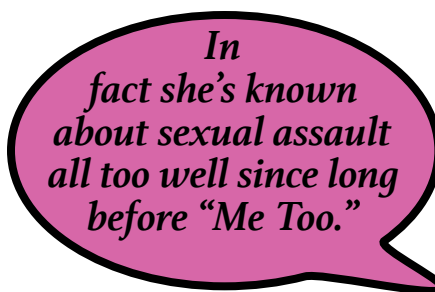
Same with public/street harassment. If you want to be a good friend to trans women, figure out how to be a good friend to someone whose regular experience goes beyond the type of (still terrible) harassment routinely experienced by cis women and extends to every-other-day threats of murder or brutal rape all summer long. Don't escalate things unnecessarily/without consent, but also think twice before physically restraining multiply marginalized people against defending themselves and their friends. There was a time when a white AFAB enby physically held back a TMC person of color from defending other trans women in the street, which was just patronizing.

Other Tags: men, AFAB, isolation

A white trans woman shared that she was experiencing domestic violence. She received only a handful of offers for safety checks (very simple) or material support (which requires variable levels of commitment) – mostly from other trans women and from cis men comrades – and a dozen offers to physically assault the cis man abuser, all from AFAB people. Few people who offer to kick someone's ass actually possess the ability, intention, or will to follow through, and it seems questionable whether the trans woman could have actually called on these folks for a beatdown even if she had wanted to.

She didn't want to, and the people who offered this solution didn't ask her what she actually needed.

Other Tags: AFAB, labor



In fact she's known about sexual assault all too well since long before "Me Too."

In conversations about the Me Too movement, a Brown Indigenous trans girl was often told that she didn't know, didn't get it, or didn't understand rape culture. In fact she's known all too well about sexual assault, long

before then. She described that people were saying these things in a context around the same time that there were lots of challenging conversations happening around transmisogyny in dyke and trans march organizing.

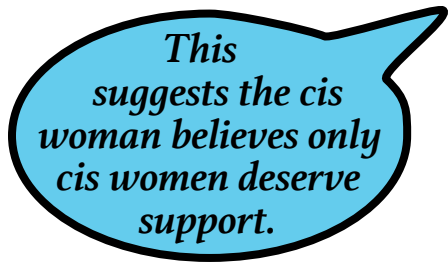
Other Tags: AFAB, multiply marginalized, blame

A white trans woman in crisis watched people in her community (most of whom knew about her situation)

rally around white cis men and AFABs multiple times to pull together housing and other needs. The only actionable offers of material support she received came from romantic partners and a cis man friend.

Other Tags: men, AFAB

There will never be enough support for abuse survivors until abuse is nonexistent – but there’s a striking mismatch between the level of community support offered to trans women experiencing abuse compared to cis women. One white trans woman knows a cis woman who received community support via a fairly extensive accountability process with a verbally abusive former partner who was a cis man. The same cis woman criticized the trans woman for simply telling people that she was experiencing domestic violence that included daily sexual assault. This suggests that the cis woman believes only cis women deserve support, or that only people who are surviving still-terrible-but-less-horrific forms of abuse deserve support, or that only people who ask for support in ways that cis women normatively ask for support deserve support.



This suggests the cis woman believes only cis women deserve support.

Other tags: cis women

In a living situation where one TMC person of color was being mistreated by another, the other housemates, mostly cis people of color, said nothing, not even to simply check in and see how the recipient of unkind behavior felt about all of it, presumably out of fear of being out of their lane/comfort zone.

Other Tags: internalization

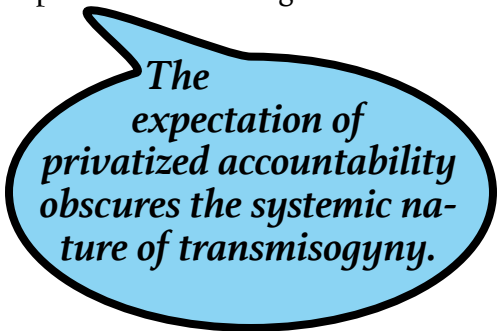
Even in spaces where most people are broadly aware of the challenges trans people face, there’s little space for sharing the actual realities of being a TMC person. A TMC Black person who needed help found more support when they said “I need help because I fucked up” or “I know I don’t need it as much as a lot of other people, but I could use some help” rather than “I’m facing discrimination and have been forced to seek help.” Cis women are less often forced to pretend challenges in their life have nothing to do with misogyny. TMC people are constantly forced to do this, even though they actually usually feel the harmful effects of misogyny the most.

Other Tags: cis women, blame

Section 3: Transmisogyny often looks like rad-left queers patronizing, invalidating, victim blaming, or framing structural problems as individual issues, when told about challenges faced by transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people.

Trans women have been told they should speak specifically with people who are directing transmisogyny toward them rather than addressing problems by speaking with friends, working with this zine, or accepting offers of solidarity from non-TMC comrades willing to call in other non-TMC people. One-on-one conversation may be helpful in many circumstances. But an insistence upon individualizing conversations about transmisogyny compounds marginalization of the trans women expected to advocate for themselves.

The expectation of privatized accountability furthermore obscures the systemic nature of transmisogyny. Transmisogyny may be present in an individual’s actions, but systemic transmisogyny is the most important problem to address, and it should be discussed widely as such. Broadly, individualized accountability also mirrors carceral



The expectation of privatized accountability obscures the systemic nature of transmisogyny.

models where victims and perpetrators of harm are dealt with in isolation from a whole community, so harms for which we are collectively responsible are never addressed in a group setting where we might take collective action toward repair.

A specific example: A trans woman had been hurt by some comrades in a group of non-men where she was the only TMC person present. This looked like her messages being ignored in a group chat, being talked over, her challenges being minimized, other group members throwing down harder for each other than for her in times of need, and other micro-aggressions that weren't one person's "fault" but were painful nevertheless. She shared this experience with her romantic partner, who is also trans, but AFAB. They had also heard from other TMC people about being hurt by folks in the same group. This all validated for the partner a sense that they'd been experiencing transphobic microaggressions as well. So, with permission from their girlfriend, they spoke with a cis woman from the group. They did not place blame but requested an opportunity to share in a reflective conversation about transphobia and transmisogyny.

The partner was told that it was "concerning" or problematic to be doing a trans woman's communication for her, especially since they were romantically involved. The trans woman was also scolded for failing to speak up for herself. This reaction demonstrates a lack of understanding of how oppression and solidarity work. Given the systemic nature of transphobia, trans people often only have each other, so solidarity work is going to happen among romantic partners. Heavier compartmentalization may be a privilege cis people don't realize they have. More importantly, the cis woman placed a burden on the trans woman to fix the transmisogyny. She has better things to do, and it's not her problem to solve. Unnecessary triangulation is certainly something to avoid, but in this case the cis woman's "concern" was just a red herring. Marginalized people need to be able to talk with relatively privileged people about our experiences, and it is the work of everybody to call in anybody who might be unknowingly participating in transmisogyny. Other tags: intent, blame, isolation

A similar but separate story: A white trans woman shared her experience of working with an accomplice to avoid facing transmisogyny alone. An AFAB enby spoke about transmisogyny with another AFAB enby and a cis woman; for clarity these three will be called the accomplice, Aby, and Olivia. Olivia asked the accomplice why it would be their business to talk with Aby about transmisogyny in which Aby had participated that didn't directly harm the accomplice. Olivia further criticized the trans woman for allowing the accomplice to advocate for her. It seems unlikely that any non-man would challenge a cis man for "calling in" another cis man around his misogyny toward a cis woman. The only way it makes sense for cis men to hold one another accountable for any sort of misogyny but not for AFABs to hold one another accountable for transmisogyny is if the trans women aren't perceived by other non-men as women. Other tags: AFAB, cis women

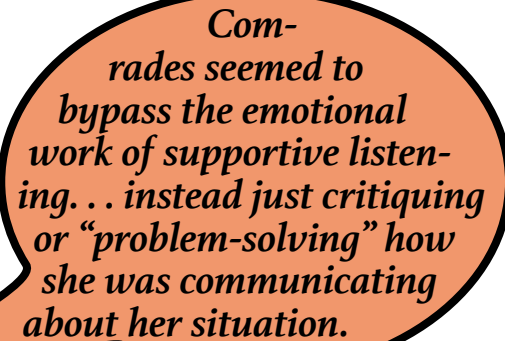
A Black TMC person disclosed information about abuse they'd experienced as a child to a white AFAB enby friend during a conversation where sharing that type of information was the norm. The abuse included having several cis women repeatedly force them to rub their face in the women's breasts, seemingly as a way to influence them to act more like a normative cishet boy. The AFAB enby's only response was that "some people don't consider breasts to be sexual" thus it didn't make sense to experience those occurrences as traumatic. This person prioritized politically correct framing of cis women's body parts over the fact that, in context, the adults were clearly behaving in an abusive manner toward a child. Other tags: AFAB

A white trans woman going through domestic violence received non-compassionate responses from different comrades on multiple occasions when trying to share about her challenges. Once, she was told to drop

the habit of prefacing with multiple trigger warnings and caveats before sharing about her life. She was encouraged by multiple other people to trust herself and her comrades to be able to handle true, non-graphic facts about her day-to-day existence, to worry less and let herself relax when outside the abusive house she lived in. The advice verged on victim-blaming, suggesting that the trans woman would feel calmer if she spoke more freely. Ironically, she was later told that her communication was problematic by two people (both AFABs, including one of the same people who had encouraged her to share more) because she provided too few trigger warnings in their opinions.

Another time, she was told by a few other AFAB comrades that she could probably get more help with getting out of her abusive situation if she let more comrades know what's up (again, possibly victim-blaming). She followed their advice and opened up a bit only to be later told by one of them that she had hurt others by mentioning (non-graphic) information about her life in a way that was "inappropriate." Rather than offering her compassionate solidarity, her comrades seemed to bypass the emotional labor of supportive listening or the work of material support, instead just critiquing or "problem-solving" how she communicated about her situation. The repeat nature of this dynamic suggests to her that there was less value placed on authentically supporting trans women survivors of abuse than cis women survivors.

Other tags: crisis, AFAB



Comrades seemed to bypass the emotional work of supportive listening. . . instead just critiquing or "problem-solving" how she was communicating about her situation.

People often fall over themselves to show how trans aware they are, i.e. congratulating trans women on performance of womanhood/femininity. This can seem patronizing because it assumes trans women aren't already an authority on womanhood.

Other tags: tokenize

Section 4: Queer AFAB people have lots of work to do to reduce harm to and deepen solidarity with transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) siblings.



Many AFABs are all too willing to be perceived as equally oppressed as trans women.

There's a presumption that AFAB enbies have natural solidarity with TMC people, often made by cis people and AFAB enbies. Allow space for trans diversity. There's no oppression olympics, and intersecting identities and diverse experiences of course means that not every trans woman has more material life challenges than every non-trans woman. But at the same time, cis people too often assume that all trans people have fairly common experiences, and many AFABs are all too willing to be perceived as equally oppressed as trans women. In reality, in general, transmisogyny subjects TMC people to a unique and steeply escalating set of barriers and dangers when compared with people from any other gender group. Cis people: don't take an AFAB's word for it that a space is welcoming to TMC people.

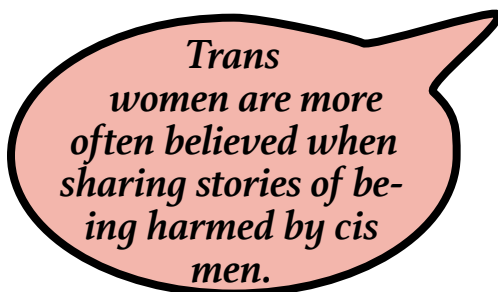
In queer spaces with people of multiple genders, "transphobia" and "misogyny" are often dealt with, especially when examples pertain to AFAB folks, but transmisogyny is rarely mentioned specifically, despite really needing to be the first and most constant form of gender oppressing being talked about and worked

on.

Other tags: internalization

TMC people, including people of color, are frequently told, sometimes explicitly, that specifically facing their unique needs and instances of transmisogyny shouldn't be prioritized. The reason is usually given that these are issues faced by everybody (code for cis women and other AFABs, who are prioritized, collapsing all forms of misogyny into the types faced by these groups). Or that the issue doesn't affect enough of the community to justify the resources it would take to make spaces more responsive to the needs of TMC people. Or, paradoxically, both at the same time.

When trans women have shared stories of how badly they've been treated by other non-men queers, they're often told maybe it's not as bad as they're making it out to be. They're more often believed when sharing stories of being harmed by cis men.



Trans women are more often believed when sharing stories of being harmed by cis men.

Other tags: blame

In a Signal thread of non-cis-men (which included only one TMC person, who's white), white AFABs almost always get a response to their messages, PoC AFABs sometimes, the trans woman almost never.

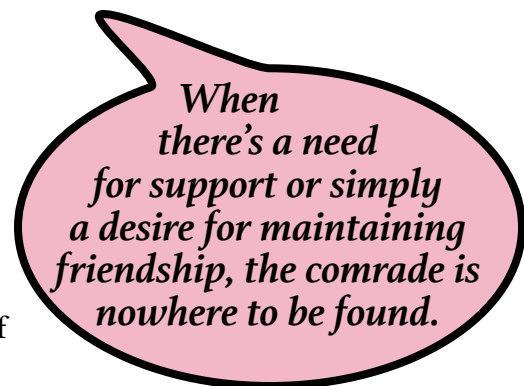
Other tags: intent

According to a Black TMC person, AFAB trans people frequently "make a little fairy out of me and talk to me in a baby voice and act like they want to take care of me so bad." Then when there's a need for actual support or simply the expressed desire for maintaining some sort of longevity in a friendship, the comrade is nowhere to be found.

Other tags: labor, crisis, multiply marginalized

In a group of all non-cis-men – mostly AFAB enbies, some cis women, and only one (white) trans woman – that meets roughly every other week, 1.5 years in, nobody has bothered to bring up the topic of transmisogyny. There's never enough work done against any oppression until it's abolished, but in comparison, transphobia as directed at AFAB enbies and intra-group racism were the topic of several conversations.

Other tags: intent



When there's a need for support or simply a desire for maintaining friendship, the comrade is nowhere to be found.

In a rave environment, a charismatic white AFAB enby referred to a TMC white enby as a "good boy," presumably assuming they're AFAB, failing to check in about gendered language and preferences. Multiple other multi-racial AFAB enbies followed suit. Zero AMAB people make this bad assumption. To this day, the TMC person still has no idea if that clique knows anything about their gendered experiences or needs.

Other tags: internalization

Multiple TMC contributors report that during COVID, they almost exclusively received check-ins from cis men and other TMC people, despite ostensibly having had more AFAB friends pre-covid.

Other tags: isolation

During a conversation about rape culture, a nonbinary person on testosterone told a Brown Indigenous trans girl that she doesn't know what it's like to be a woman. They apologized but in a way that made light

of the harmful impact of such a comment. Being forced into female standards as a child is one traumatic experience; being forced out of them is also traumatic. And when AMAB people take on roles or act in ways associated with womanhood, it can be a death sentence.

Other tags: blame

In exchange for labor, a brown AFAB enby gave a Black AMAB enby some ketamine. They said, “this will help you calm down,” in a tone that sounds like the stereotype of talking down to a rambunctious little boy.

Other tags: multiply marginalized, intent

TMC enbies constantly need to correct everybody with regard to assumptions made about their gender identity or gendered experiences. And frequently get corrected on their own gender performance, including by non-TMC trans people. AFAB enbies do experience misgendering, but the space allowed AFABs to inhabit varied gender performances is much greater.

Other tags: internalization

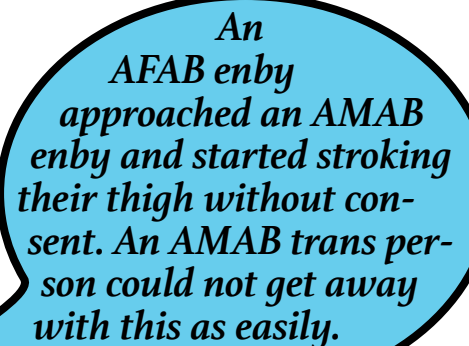
Section 5: A sub-section so extensive it gets its own section: Queer AFAB people often engage in behaviors consistent with “toxic masculinity”* but project the label onto transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people.

A group was forming with an intention of bringing together non-cis-men to engage in organizing together. One cis woman expressed concern about inviting trans women to the group because she assumed that trans women would speak up too much, citing the way that men take up space in conversations. This is a transmisogynist stereotype, but more importantly, it’s revealing that trans women who speak up for themselves and “take up space” are considered a problem, whereas transmasculine folks who do the same are often celebrated as empowering and met with a “girl power” type of enthusiasm. This is actually invalidating and transphobic toward transmasculine people as well as being a transmisogynist double standard. The trans woman sharing this story heard about the cis woman’s concerns through a nonbinary friend. The way in which cis women confide transmisogynist ideas with non-TMC trans people makes it especially challenging for trans women to directly address these problems in their communities despite knowing all too clearly what’s happening.

Other tags: organizing dynamics, blame, cis women

Many rad-left spaces have a heteronormative underpinning, described by one contributor as a “bro-ey vibe that even many AFABs take part in.” People often take up an attitude of “fuck it, being radical means acting as shitty as our oppressors get to act,” and this only serves to harm the most marginalized people in any group, including trans women of color.

Other tags: organizing dynamics



An AFAB enby approached an AMAB enby and started stroking their thigh without consent. An AMAB trans person could not get away with this as easily.

At a rave, an AFAB enby approached an AMAB enby and started stroking their thigh without consent. An AMAB trans person could definitely not get away with this sort of behavior nearly as easily.

In conversations with cis women, trans women are often written off as being overly aggressive in their style of discourse. A cis woman in a rad-left space could say the same statement in the same tone and be congratulated for being strong.

Other tags: cis women

When engaging in potentially problematic gendered behavior, i.e. talking “too much”: (not always but broadly) cis men get called out or tolerated, AFABs get a pass, and trans women get discarded. Race plays a role here, as well, with less leniency being afforded people of color. Figure out how to give honest critical feedback to marginalized folks if you’re going to claim to be about including them.

Other tags: men, multiply marginalized

A white trans woman was at a party with “friends.” A few people in particular repeatedly asked how she’s doing, what she needs, if she wants to talk about challenges in her life: “no really I’m so here for you, feel free to talk openly about what’s happening.” The trans woman disclosed, under social pressure, information about her experiences with domestic violence. Though it was uncomfortable for her, it appeared warmly received. However, when hanging out with two of those same people (both AFAB) on a later date, after they asked her personal questions again, they scolded her for “dropping hard shit” on them because she mentioned a truncated version of her violent current reality.

Other tags: blame, crisis, tokenize

With a couple AFAB enbies in particular, anytime a trans woman opens her mouth to speak in a meeting, she’s cut off and can never contribute. This happens to varying degrees in plenty of spaces.

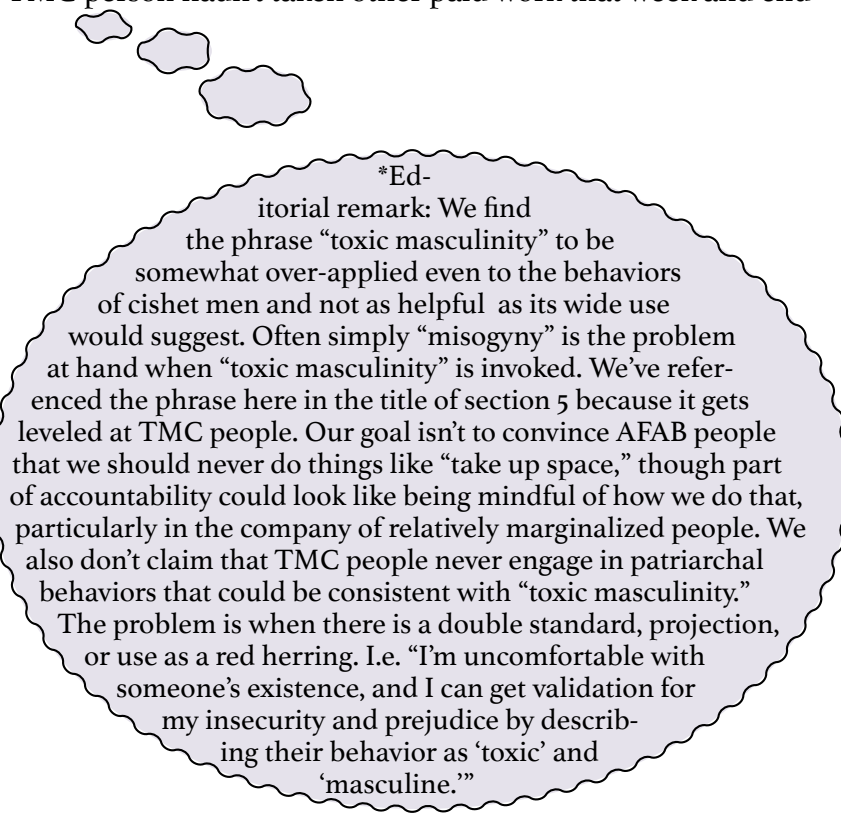
Other tags: intent, blame

A white afab enby who calls themselves an anarchist offered to pay a Black transmisogyny-constrained person to help them move across the country. The agreement was that they’d cover transportation, lodging, and food and pay an additional \$630. During the trip, they paid for only half the food. They pressured the TMC person to have sex and threw a fit when they were rejected. After the trip, they paid nothing, stating that they recalled the agreement being to pay for food only. After days of texting, they eventually paid \$200. They said they couldn’t pay more because they only had \$10,000 in savings, which wasn’t sufficient for them to meet their financial goals. The TMC person hadn’t taken other paid work that week and ended up not being able to make rent that month. After more text exchanges, they chose to give up on getting the remaining \$430.

Other tags: crisis, multiply marginalized, blame

Lots of rad left queer cis women and AFAB enbies talk a lot about hating men. Then engage in all the same micro-aggressions that men direct toward all non-men, but directed at trans women. Anything you might think of as bro-y behavior – ‘splaining, condescending, unwanted touch or sexual comments, etc. – there are plenty of AFABs doing, as well, except more often directed at trans women and other TMC people than at other AFAB people.

Other tags: men



*Ed-itorial remark: We find the phrase “toxic masculinity” to be somewhat over-applied even to the behaviors of cishet men and not as helpful as its wide use would suggest. Often simply “misogyny” is the problem at hand when “toxic masculinity” is invoked. We’ve referenced the phrase here in the title of section 5 because it gets leveled at TMC people. Our goal isn’t to convince AFAB people that we should never do things like “take up space,” though part of accountability could look like being mindful of how we do that, particularly in the company of relatively marginalized people. We also don’t claim that TMC people never engage in patriarchal behaviors that could be consistent with “toxic masculinity.” The problem is when there is a double standard, projection, or use as a red herring. I.e. “I’m uncomfortable with someone’s existence, and I can get validation for my insecurity and prejudice by describing their behavior as ‘toxic’ and ‘masculine.’”

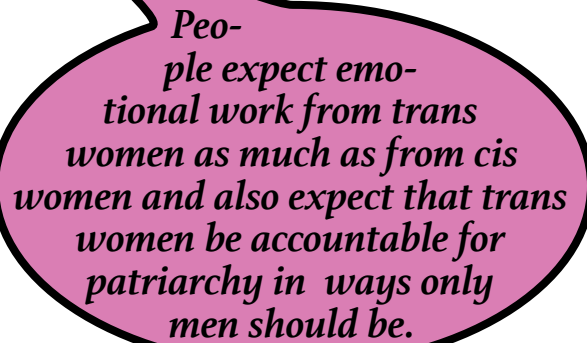
Section 6: People in rad-left spaces often demand labor (explicitly or subtly) of transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people without acknowledging that this is happening.

Trans women are expected to mediate among gendered groups and speak from multiple perspectives and can't just be themselves. Most people expect emotional work from trans women as much as from cis women and also expect that trans women be accountable for patriarchy in all the ways that only cis men should be held accountable.

Other tags: cis women, men, blame

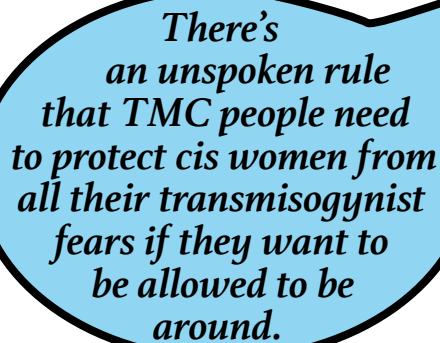
Many times, cis women and AFAB enbies have texted a trans woman asking for help or advice about organizing work but ignored requests going the other direction. Sometimes these requests for labor even come shortly after ignoring messages from the trans woman that she doesn't have capacity for such work due to being overwhelmed by transmisogyny in her life.

Other tags: AFAB, cis women, crisis, tokenize



People expect emotional work from trans women as much as from cis women and also expect that trans women be accountable for patriarchy in ways only men should be.

Multiple contributors shared an experience of what happens sometimes when they've asked out a cis woman on a date—in a way that was gentle, direct, immediately responsive to “no,” and done in a context such as a queer bar where flirting and asking people out on dates is normalized. They've heard later that rumors were spread about them having violated boundaries in some way or even being unsafe to be around. Anybody can have any preferences they want about how much they get flirted with, and trans women are as capable as anybody of violating boundaries. But talking to somebody at a bar about the possibility of going a date and immediately walking away when they're not interested is only a boundary violation if people in that space have regular conversations about the importance of never hitting on



There's an unspoken rule that TMC people need to protect cis women from all their transmisogynist fears if they want to be allowed to be around.

anybody in the same way we often have conversations about the importance of only touching somebody physically after asking first. Nobody involved in this zine project has the experience of noticing a majority of cis women being told they've violated boundaries for hitting on another cis woman or a trans woman at queer bar. There's a double standard, a demonization of TMC people, and an unspoken rule that TMC people need to protect cis women from all their transmisogynist fears if they want to be allowed to be around.

Other tags: blame, AFAB, cis women

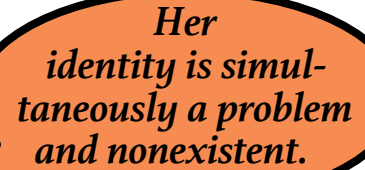
Many cis people act like they think it's not possible to work on combatting transmisogynist structures, norms, or behaviors, without a trans woman being physically present. For example, a cis person had a hypothesis for how to make a space more welcoming for trans women. Another cis person shot them down because there were no trans women present to give a seal of approval. A TMC enby expressed agreement with the first cis person that it's better to do something than nothing and that the proposal would actually actively help them and might help other TMC people and trans women. Again, the proposal was shot down.

Other tags: tokenize

Section 7: There are patterned dynamics of marginalization and exploitation of transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people in rad-left organizing spaces.

A white trans woman experienced being pushed away from organizing spaces but in social spaces being treated “like one of the dudes.” Socially, her womanhood is erased, while politically, her womanhood is seen as a reason to exclude her. Her identity is simultaneously a problem and nonexistent.

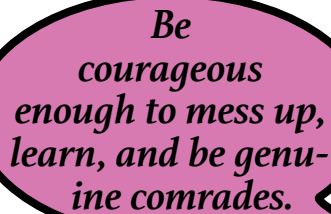
Other tags: intent, multiply marginalized



Her identity is simultaneously a problem and nonexistent.

A white trans woman lived and engaged in anarchist organizing for many years prior to coming out as trans and being perceived as a trans woman. Prior to coming out, she was often invited to meetings or included in project planning. This stopped abruptly when she transitioned. She attributes this to two factors. First, by misogynists, femininity is associated with weakness, a lack of voracity, and ineffective organizing. Furthermore, cis men’s fragility involves a lack of knowledge of how to work respectfully with trans women that leads them to just not engage at all. Cis folks should work to be courageous enough to mess up, learn, and be genuine comrades with trans women.

Other tags: solidarity, men



Be courageous enough to mess up, learn, and be genuine comrades.

In general, people sometimes disengage or talk behind backs when disappointed with comrades’ behavior. But for many trans women the effects are more extreme. A trans woman might be frequently, enthusiastically included in projects only to soon be excluded – often in the form of being outright ignored – and left to wonder if people are being assholes, or if she did something wrong that needs work, or both.

Other tags: tokenize, isolation, intent

There’s lots of structural exclusion of TMC people. For example, in a public health initiative (put on by an ostensibly rad left organization) focused on a specific need only faced by people with penises, only men were accepted as participants. In a parallel initiative for people with vulvas, trans men could participate—albeit requiring a “female liaison” to join the “women’s” program. Trans men were invalidated, but trans people with penises were completely excluded.

Other tags: isolation

Even in majority-queer rad left spaces, jokes are still being made about men wearing women’s clothing. Cis men often act embarrassed about possibly being seen as being OK with using a “women’s” products.

Other tags: men, cis women

In abolition work, a trans woman was told that an idea for supporting incarcerated trans women would detract too much from the work already being done to support cis people inside. This was referred to by the TMC person reporting this anecdote as “what-about-ism” or “we’ll get to that.”

Other tags: cis women, crisis

Section 8: The overwhelming assault on trans women in this society leads to internalized transmisogyny, difficulty gauging how safe any space may or may not be, and marginalization for transmisogyny-constrained (TMC) people even in trans-centered spaces.

Internalized transmisogyny affects how TMC people show up in a space. Be aware of this. It's actually impossible for a TMC person to ever live up to normative gendered expectations (i.e. don't speak up too much or too little). TMC people's own fears about being read as a "man" can lead to self-policing unless a space is explicitly safe enough to just be, take risks, receive sincere feedback, and adjust behavior to align with what actually feels right for oneself. When that space isn't explicitly held, self-removal is often a TMC person's only option for moderating the internal conflict that ensues. In fact, the idea that tiny details about one's behavior grossly affect whether/how that person can show up in a space is classic misogyny. Usually TMC people are left by cis women to navigate the challenges of internalized misogyny alone and all too often actually affirmed in their fears that nothing they do could possibly be good enough.

Other tags: blame, labor, cis women

Trans women are frequently confused for or assumed to be other trans women by many people throughout society. Many people understand little about what it means to be trans and act like there's only one trans woman in the world whom they see everywhere. It is a constant, abrasive occurrence anytime but one that is more predictable outside queer spaces and especially hurtful when done by queer people. A white trans woman expressed frequently being confused for another white trans woman with whom she shares many social spaces; often they are the only two trans women around and share little in common other than race and gender identity. One time, a nonbinary person used the wrong name for one of these two trans women and, when corrected, said "Oh yeah, you're the other one." This explicitly dismissive response from somebody who should understand the gravity of their mistake felt dehumanizing.

Other tags: tokenize

Several contributors expressed feeling tension in some interactions with other TMC people. This might look like not acknowledging one another's presence, projecting onto one another, or seeking out the company of cis women rather than that of other trans women. We're including this in the zine because it's a real experience of the impact of transmisogyny. To be clear, though, these intra-TMC challenges only exist because our entire cultural climate is hostile to the existence of trans women, and it's near impossible to completely avoid internalizing oppression. Cis people are obviously the primary perpetrators of transmisogyny and always in a position to benefit in some way from its existence, while trans women are always harmed by transmisogyny.

In multiple group projects, a trans woman has experienced being bullied by the only other trans woman present. The victim left; the bully is left with clout associated with being the token minority. Everybody else seemingly took no notice and was satisfied being a "good ally" to the remaining trans woman without having to deal with the discomfort of having multiple trans women around.

Other tags: tokenize



Trans women have reached out to get together with friends in "the community" and are almost always completely ignored rather than told a simple "sorry can't hang."

Several trans women have often reached out to get together with friends in "the community" and are almost always completely ignored rather than told a simple "sorry can't hang." Flakiness happens to everybody, but this is a pervasive problem that happens more to trans women than to people of other genders.

Other tags: intent, isolation

It can be challenging to name transmisogyny when it exists because of internalized transmisogyny and self-invalidation. Furthermore, transmisogyny is more overt outside anarchist spaces; it can take up more space in one's brain and be easier to name. But transmisogyny is still present and important to address even if it is challenging to identify.

Other tags: blame

Sometimes nonbinary people communicate a belief that they're more trans or better at being trans than trans women. This leaves trans women feeling marginalized in trans spaces. Just because everybody is trans doesn't mean everybody experiences that transness in the same way or feels welcome in ostensibly trans spaces.

Other tags: AFAB, intent

Section 9: Suggestions for practicing solidarity against transmisogyny. Tag: solidarity

Several examples of transmisogyny throughout the zine relate to the need to act more in solidarity with TMC people. There is no need to over-extend one's own boundaries in order to provide material or emotional support. This only leads to disappointment all around. Do, however, be honest with yourself about who you throw down for and whether that matches the identities of people in your life or people you claim to care about. Be honest about your capacities, desires, or concerns if TMC people reach out for support. Be ready to own the fact if your actions don't always match your stated values.

A Brown Indigenous trans girl said that she does see allies stepping up in some spaces. She appreciates when cis people simply ask what she needs of them so she can put them to work. She'd like it to be normalized to talk about transmisogyny and how to do better.

Other tags: multiply marginalized

Using "they" pronouns for somebody you don't yet know well is okay – once. It's ok in the context of "I just met so-and-so. What are their pronouns?" Then, hopefully you'll know the right pronouns to use. Thereafter, always use the person's correct pronouns. Many trans people, especially but not exclusively many trans women, specifically do not accept they pronouns. Even some trans people are in the bad habit of using they pronouns for everybody, but that doesn't mean anybody should follow suit. Use people's correct pronouns.



Use
people's cor-
rect pronouns.



She
appreciates when
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what she needs.

On Instagram, a group shared several posts promoting the importance of trans women's safety in the streets. One trans woman spoke about these posts with a nonbinary friend. The friend took umbrage with the fact that the posts specifically addressed trans women rather than all people who experience street harassment. A trans woman contributor emphasized that this reveals a lack of effort to understand trans women's experiences and the extreme levels and numerical frequency of violent abuse. This is not extreme in the same way as when white supremacists deploy the phrase "all lives matter," but there's a similar flavor of invalidation. When specificity in naming abuse faced by trans women is framed as a problem, it's clear that someone has not been listening to trans women or putting in effort to understand the specific manner and degree of misogyny experienced by trans women. It's all of our jobs to educate ourselves and strive to understand others' experiences. This is especially true for radicals; education is part of the project of the

revolution. It's not possible to understand everything about another person's life experiences, but effort needs to be made to educate oneself about specifics of experiences of folks with identities different from our own, going beyond just interpersonally expressing sympathetic emotions toward others. Other tags: AFAB, internalization

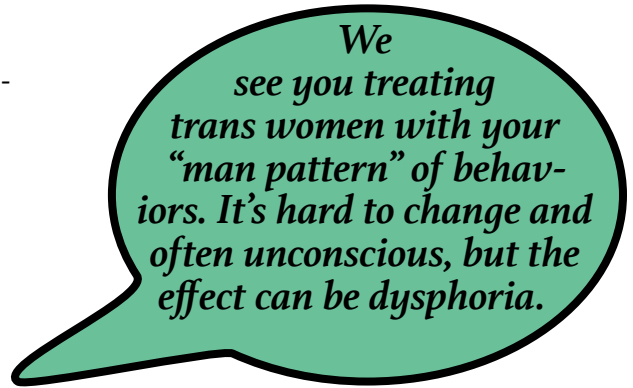


@wearetheoneswevebeenwaitingfor is a multi-gender group of people prioritizing material solidarity with TMC people. Check them out on instagram, amplify their work, donate. Follow their example and center material solidarity with TMC Black, Brown, and Indigenous people in your work.

Prompt non-transmisogyny-constrained people to attend to their gender, what it means for their life, gendered power they hold, and transmisogynist harms they've perpetuated. Dig into feelings about one's own lived experiences vis-a-vis transmisogyny.

If you think you might be observing subtle transmisogyny, there's no need to shame anybody, but name it in the moment as much as possible, or bring it up at the next check-in if a space has structured time for addressing accountability.

Trans people, especially TMC people, are very aware of gendered communication and expectations. Any given person likely has one set of tone, inflections, word choices, boundaries, and expectations when communicating with men and another for women. We see you treating trans women with your "man pattern" of behaviors, even if you get pronouns right. Sometimes trans people do this, as well, but less often or overtly than cis people. It's hard shit to change, and it's often unconscious, but the effect can still be intense dysphoria for the trans woman being treated like a man. The best thing to do is seek to recognize how you treat people in gendered ways and interrogate whether you really fully believe that any given trans woman is a woman.



In groups, organizing spaces, etc., structure in time to check in about issues that affect trans women, so it doesn't fall on trans women to bring it up, and without expecting trans women to mediate that conversation. Establish structured roles with clear handoffs in recurring meetings, otherwise a disproportionate amount of labor is likely to fall on trans women.

Other tags: labor, organizing dynamics

Look at each conflict through a lens of transmisogyny. It's ok to have legitimate critiques of a TMC person's behavior, but also ask, "Would I still have a problem with this if they looked more 'feminine,' 'petite,' etc?"

Other tags: blame, intent

Provide critiques with sensitivity to stereotypes. Don't avoid honesty, but address what you know about how transmisogyny might be involved. If concerned about a trans woman's behavior, ask yourself if you're applying a double standard. If you've done that self-analysis and believe you have a valid critique, name all that. Use your own perspective when sharing critical feedback. For example, say simply "you talked over me," or if you want to go a bit deeper, "you talked over me, and I'm wondering if me telling you this hits any sore spots," rather than "you're talking over people, which is problematic in a gendered (masculine/patriarchal) way," if a TMC person talked over you.

Other tags: AFAB, blame, cis women, internalization, intent, organizing dynamics


People who have started learning about identity as an element of organizing often start to take on an identity they're not part of. For example, a cis person challenged a trans woman of color skillshare facilitator on best practices in working with TMC people in a mutual aid project with contradictory anecdotes, devil's advocacy, essentialism, instagram quotes about trans equity, etc. People often jump to an assumption that one must do x, y, z "good thing" for trans women rather than simply holding space for the actual trans women present to share their actual wants and needs.

Other tags: organizing dynamics, multiply marginalized

When organizing a space according to gender, i.e. when caucusing around issues of gender identity, cis people fixate on trying to account for every possible scenario for where folks with particular identities might fit in—with especially fraught conversation focused on the existence of TMC enbies—rather than just choosing a few basic categories and leaving it up to trans people present to decide where they want to fit in.

Other tags: organizing dynamics

One trans woman reported that her name is frequently mispronounced or purely gotten wrong by many people even past meeting her the first time and initially learning how she says her name. Names are always important, and it is especially essential for trans people to have their chosen names gotten right by folks in their communities.



***Names
are always
important.***

It's important to consider consent when discussing transmisogyny with TMC people if you're not TMC. One Brown Indigenous trans girl shared an example of feeling condescended by a cis friend. Out of the blue, the friend privately sent her a post by a famous trans person with a comment that amounted to, "see this is what I'm talking about," with no explanation, and not related to any ongoing conversation between them. Receiving that message in that way made her feel uncomfortable, like she was being used for her friend's virtue signaling. Interactions like that can leave her feeling fetishized, not understood.

Many TMC people have experienced more harm within queer spaces that say they're inclusive of trans women, than in cis-het spaces. There are no natural allies. Ask how we're actually meeting the needs of people we say we're including, and how we might know when we are or are not living up to that intention. It's also not bad to just not say a space is intended to be safe for trans women if there aren't actually trans women organizers who can help gauge whether this might even approach being true.

Other tags: AFAB, cis women, internalization, intent, organizing dynamics, tokenizing

There's no need for hard canceling, but be willing to stop working quite so much with folks who repeatedly refuse to address requests for accountability to treat trans women like people. There are too often expectations that people who have "done so much good work" deserve to maintain pivotal roles in community projects, even if they've been shitty to trans women the whole time.

Other tags: organizing dynamics



***Make
norms explicit.***

Norm-setting in "inclusive women's" spaces is often indexed to whatever might be perceived as typical behavior for a cis woman. Key word perception. Do more to make norms more explicit. Name and specify what they look like, so TMC people can at least live up to expectations if they really need to be in the space, or leave before getting hurt just because they failed to act cis/AFAB enough, or challenge the expectations if they see them as transmisogynist and wish to take on that work.

Other tags: AFAB, blame, cis women, intent, labor, organizing dynamics

See TMC enbies as trans and as TMC, and see trans women as trans and as women and as TMC. Don't just be generally friendly to someone; get curious about how transmisogyny affects their life.

A Brown Indigenous trans girl made a request of AFAB trans folks: give her space and time to trust at her own pace, in her own way. Respect that she might not want to be around mean-mugging and other behaviors she experiences in lots of queer spaces.

People keep using the phrase “women and femmes” years after it was called out for becoming popularized by TERFs. Lots of people might just not know, but looking into that could be a small thing that could help conversations be a bit less triggering for some trans women.

Cis people sometimes hyper-focus on pushing politically correct practices and language use just because they heard once that it would help somebody, even when all the TMC people in a space are saying it’s not helpful in the given context. For example, there has been a fixation on trying to fit an exhaustive list of pronouns or gendered identity categories on a mutual aid registration form, rather than just letting people write in what they feel like sharing about their gender.

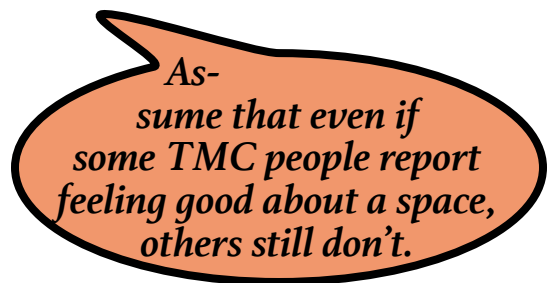
Cis people often resist attempts to bring specificity into language used about gendered bodies. For example, a TMC person was scolded for using the term “people with uteruses” because that “essentializes women to their uterus” when they were literally talking about an issue that has to do with uteruses, not gender.

Rather than expecting oneself to get things right and to be treated by TMC people like you know what’s best for them, try coming to interactions with an analysis of “transmisogyny is real and deep; if I’m not TMC and the topic is gender, I’m here to listen.”

Other tags: labor

If efforts, even extensive efforts, even extensive efforts that have produced some desired results, have been undertaken to address transmisogyny in a space, assume it’s still present. Like any other -ism, it’s the water we all swim in. Assume that even if some TMC people report feeling good about a space, others still don’t.

Other tags: intent, organizing dynamics



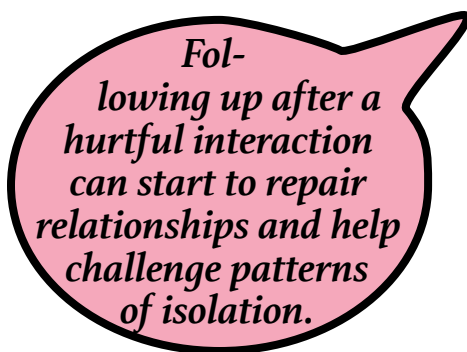
Assume that even if some TMC people report feeling good about a space, others still don't.

Remember that if you’ve met one trans person, you’ve only met one trans person.

Other tags: tokenize

Section 10: Solidarity and accountability: a vignette.

Transmisogyny is never the only form of oppression being reproduced in an interaction when trans women are present. All forms of oppression are always simultaneously acting on all of us, whether we’re potentially marginalized or privileged in any particular way. How to enact anti-oppressive politics can get tricky in situations where people of differing marginalizations impact one another. This is a longer account where that messy reality might be especially evident. It is also an account of how following up after a hurtful interaction can start to repair relationships and help challenge the patterns of isolation that trans women face.



Following up after a hurtful interaction can start to repair relationships and help challenge patterns of isolation.

A housing-insecure white trans woman applied to a housing offer posted as open to anybody and prioritizing QPOC. The application asked a question about the “meaning of home.” Given that housing is a charged topic for marginalized people, even including white people if they’re trans women, this seemed like a searching question. The trans woman responded honestly with a few sentences providing a

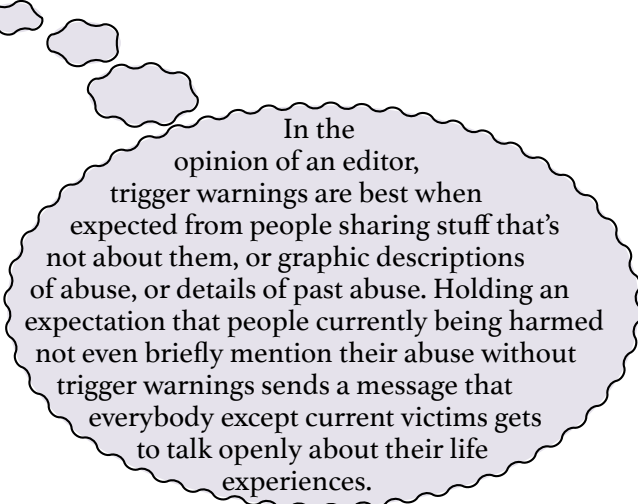
non-graphic explanation of the domestic violence (DV) situation she would be leaving, plus more sentences about her hopes and dreams for something better. In the reply sent by an AFAB TPOC who already knew the applicant, she was told the room was offered to a person of color – legit; was offered sympathy – nice; and was informed that reading her response was triggering – understandable. Unfortunately, they then also advised her against disclosing her experience of DV to others. That part smacked of transmisogynistic condescension and double standards.

Even if the AFAB TPOC’s intentions had been benevolent - perhaps to protect the trans woman from future rejections - to recommend that she hide her experiences was to shame and silence, and to reinforce the fear and shame dynamics that keep survivors in violent situations. What’s worse, however, is realizing that AFAB survivors are usually given more space than that. There is usually an ethic of support for a survivor’s agency in choosing when and how to disclose. In the trans woman’s experience (and those of this zine’s editors), white AFABs are rarely scolded by rad-left queer AFABs for disclosing information about their own abuse situations, even if unannounced and relatively graphic. By contrast, the trans woman’s description of her situation in this case had been brief, had been responding to a personal question on a weighty topic, and had named her current life reality.

The TPOC’s needs of course must also be given weight. It’s not clear what those needs might have been, but if a POC wishes they received less information about white people’s life challenges, or perhaps if someone wishes the use of trigger warnings was more universal, that’s completely fair. We don’t know how this individual has treated other survivors they’ve met, or how they’ve been treated when going through hard times. Only that their response matched a pattern in how the trans woman is treated in her life: silenced, critiqued, not supported. The double standards faced by white AFABs and white trans women trying to escape violence can not be ignored.

Structural issues regularly play out in interpersonal interactions in ways that are harmful if not attended to. In broader society, many double standards seem to operate regarding how survivors of domestic violence are treated. Many have been called out by groups or researchers including double standards between white survivors and POC survivors with similar genders, and between cis women survivors and cis men survivors. We want to raise up trans women’s concerns that their crises are also treated to a lesser standard.

Giving attention to the systemic influences within our relationships, even when the structural dynamics are themselves messy, can then help mitigate the harms. In this case, a while after that challenging interaction, the contributor reached out to the other person with an expressed intent of naming existing tension and acknowledging the ways in which the exchange had been triggering for both of them. While not offering accountability in return, the other person did respond stating they were appreciative of her reaching out and that they weren’t harboring lingering hard feelings, that they hoped things could be basically chill. Where many people would only be avoidant or defensive when faced with a mutually-triggering situation, the AFAB TPOC offered a degree of accountability by listening and leaving the door open for connection in the future. Because of this, the trans woman said the transmisogynistic elements of their behavior began to feel less acutely painful.



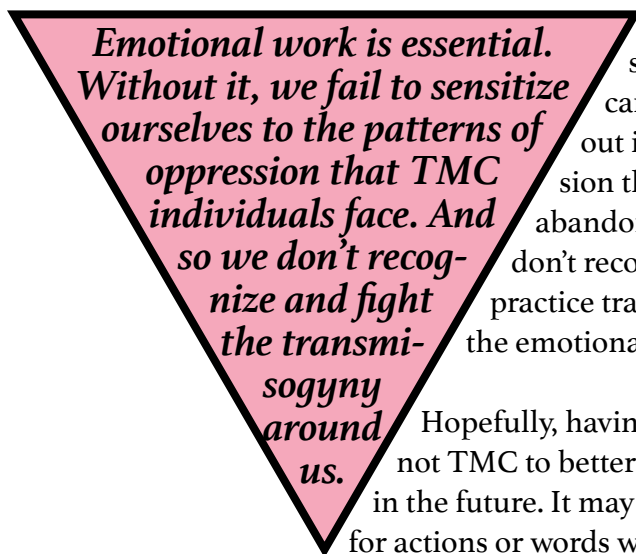
In the opinion of an editor, trigger warnings are best when expected from people sharing stuff that’s not about them, or graphic descriptions of abuse, or details of past abuse. Holding an expectation that people currently being harmed not even briefly mention their abuse without trigger warnings sends a message that everybody except current victims gets to talk openly about their life experiences.

Conclusion

Huge glittering thank yous to all the contributors to this zine, who recounted their painful experiences and described their analyses of the factors at play in transmisogynistic behaviors. It is an honor to get to lift up your insights.

Heart-warmed thank yous to all the readers of this zine for taking on the work of facing the diverse and yet patterned experiences of transmisogyny that were included. TMC individuals have shared joy and genius with the world time and time again, and their accomplishments are inspiring—but this zine focused on the rougher realities and you chose to stick with it.

It probably was not easy to read so many painful or angering accounts one after another, especially if you have TMC loved ones. It might lead to some cognitive and emotional overwhelm. The experiences might have blurred together in your mind (as was the experience of one editor), even when trying to process the poignance of each experience uniquely. To the extent that you were able, thank you for letting yourself hold the emotional realities of TMC people in your heart.



Emotional work is essential. Without it, we fail to sensitize ourselves to the patterns of oppression that TMC individuals face. And so we don't recognize and fight the transmisogyny around us.

As internal as it may seem, this emotional work is essential. For one, it is the basis for attunement and skillful caring work after a TMC comrade is harmed. But also, without it, we fail to sensitize ourselves to the patterns of oppression that trans women and TMC individuals face—including abandonment, isolation, tokenization, eviction, etc. And so we don't recognize and fight the transmisogyny around us. We passively practice transmisogyny, rather than revolutionary praxis, by not doing the emotional work.

Hopefully, having read these 90ish accounts will help those of us who are not TMC to better recognize or even interrupt transmisogynistic dynamics in the future. It may start with ourselves, such as by supporting accountability for actions or words we said, or that our comrades said, more deeply and sooner after the fact. If you recognized parts of yourself in the transmisogynist behaviors that you read about, thank you for tolerating that discomfort enough to reflect on your own actions and their possible impacts on the TMC individuals around you. That is important emotional work.

Accountability is essential to being an accomplice against oppression. While intent and impact are different, each has its separate importance. It can be so painful when the impacts we make on others turn out to be opposite to what our intentions were. One editor recalls a time when they were called in for having oppressive behaviors, which shocked them because their intentions had been to not enact oppressive behaviors and they even thought they had been doing a good job. As painful as that shock was, learning from the feedback was worth it. What's even more worth it is making sure folks can trust that you are a safe person to give difficult feedback to. That is essential for becoming a better accomplice in combating oppression collectively.

Some of the experiences shared in this zine might have seemed to make negative assumptions about the intentions behind others' actions, when others' intentions cannot be directly known. It might have seemed like there was room to assume more positive or neutral motives. Unfortunately though, transmisogyny is so widespread that it is unfair to expect TMC individuals to assume positive intent so much of the time.

Having to read others' intentions all the time, in the face of prejudice and danger, is exhausting. So part of being an effective accomplice against transmisogyny might mean building trust bravely. It might require you to make your intentions transparent and to invite feedback about how your actions or offers strike your TMC comrades. That kind of transparency can feel difficult for many reasons. Finding accurate words for our intentions is not always easy, for one. Offering authenticity and connection also means risking rejection. But also, once expressed, our intentions can surprise us. They might be more complicated or less aligned with our actual values than we thought. They might reveal ways we need to reconsider some assumptions, or get some unacknowledged needs met elsewhere. Or they can become yardsticks to measure our action's success. Not living up to our intentions or values can be painful. For those of us with relational traumas in our pasts, such transparency and potential feedback might feel down right dangerous. And like any trust-building conversation, our contributions need to be offered in attunement simultaneously to ourselves and to our comrades. It is hard work. Part of being a skillful accomplice,

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then, is knowing and managing our relationship tendencies so that we can show up better. As tempting as it may feel to focus only on privately self-checking our inner motives for transmisogyny and addressing those, stopping there (not expressing our inner motives) is not enough. Stopping there leaves the burden on trans women to positively interpret our motives.

Luckily, we do not have to do it alone. We can find our people, as the editors and contributors in this volume are doing. We can light our flames to attract others and sharpen our tools together. The more we non-TMC folks can do to end transmisogyny, the less work will burden our trans women and TMC comrades... And the sooner we all can get freer to be our full selves... And the more effective our collective solidarity against all oppressions can be.

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